

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18895

EXDIS

FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UR, US
SUBJECT: CRAWFORD CASE: DOBRYNIN RESPONSE TO IH

1. I AM INCLINED TO THINK WILLIAM CRAWFORD'S INITIAL REACTION --TO DECLINE DOBRYNIN'S OFFER--IS THE CORRECT ONE. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIET DECISION TO ARREST JAY CRAWFORD WAS A POLITICAL ONE. I ALSO THINK WE CAN BE SURE THAT THE SOVIETS WERE CAREFUL TO ASSURE THAT THEY COULD ORGANIZE A PLAUSIBLE CASE AGAINST HIM, BY MEANS OF PRE-ARRANGED TESTIMONY AND/OR EVIDENCE WHICH SHOWS TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF SOVIET REGULATIONS. I SEE NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY ACCEPTANCE, EXCEPT TO CONFIRM OUR ASSUMPTIONS. I SEE ONLY DISADVANTAGES: THE SOVIETS COULD CLAIM TO BE "FORTH-COMING" WHEN THE PLAIN FACT IS THAT THEY ARE USING CRAWFORD AS A HOSTAGE; UNDESERVED DIGNITY WOULD BE LENT TO THE SOVIET LEGAL PROCESS; WE AND IH WOULD GET OURSELVES INVOLVED IN A DISCUSSION OF THE TECHNICALITIES OF SOVIET LAW WHEN WE SHOULD INSTEAD BE FOCUSING ON UNACCEPTABLE SOVIET BEHAVIOR; THE SOVIETS WOULD BE BETTER POSITIONED TO PRESSURE IH TO RETURN TO BUSINESS AS USUAL.

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2. JAY CRAWFORD CALLED ON ME SHORTLY AFTER HIS RELEASE AND GAVE ME SOLEMN ASSURANCES THAT HE HAD DONE NOTHING ILLEGAL. I SEE NO REASON TO GO BEYOND THIS AT THIS TIME, PARTICULARLY SINCE WE ALL REALIZE THAT THE SOVIETS CAN EASILY CONCOCT A CASE.

3. ONE FINAL NOTE. I FIND PARTICULARLY GALLING
DOBRYNIN'S BLAND ASSERTION THAT CRAWFORD WAS RELEASED
AS A FAVOR TO MCCORMICK. WITHOUT THE RELEASE OF THE
WOODBIDGE DUO, CRAWFORD WOULD STILL BE LANGUISHING
IN JAIL. TOON

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